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Halt Asked For CIA Millions For Friends Of Middle East

WASHINGTON — President Johnson was urged last week to end American financial support to the American Friends of the Middle East through Central Intelligence Agency grants.

The appeal was made by Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, chairman of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

THE APPEAL, addressed also to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, pointed out that leaders of AFME have opposed economic and military aid to Israel while supporting such assistance to the Arab states.

Rabbi Bernstein said the initial protests five years ago were believed to have resulted in termination of such aid.

"We were dismayed to learn that this was not the case, that the CIA was, in fact, continuing to subsidize the American Friends of the Middle East through the use of philanthropic foundations," he wrote.

The committee, the rabbi said, questioned the wisdom "of any secret subsidies to American organizations engaged in public action or propaganda on the American scene."

He said there is no better example "of the unwisdom of this practice than the grants to AFME."

THE COMMITTEE stated that AFME "disseminated anti-Israel and anti-Zionist views prejudicial to the State of Israel," had slandered a large segment of the American people, and was a major supporter of the Organization of Arab Students "which abuses the hospitality of the United States by prosecuting a propaganda campaign against American support for Israel."

Rabbi Bernstein said the committee has always favored a strong policy in the Near East "which offers friendship to both Israel and the Arab states."

"We have never accepted the 'either-or' ultimatum of the Arab states that we must choose between them and Israel and that we must diminish our support for Israel to win their favor," he said. "We believe that our position is in accord with U.S. policy, but AFME criticizes the support which American Jews extend to Israel."

THE NEAR EAST REPORT, edited by I. L. Kenen, asserted that a study of Internal Revenue returns, AFME's annual reports and other sources, reveals that AFME received almost \$2 million between 1952 and 1957 from the Dearborn Foundation in Chicago and the San Jacinto Fund in Houston, and that eight additional foundations gave AFME at least one-half million dollars from 1960 through 1965.